

As a flight attendant for United Airlines, I have a personal and professional stake in the possibility of cellular telephones being able to be used aboard airborne aircraft. I can see where people would want this technology available, as I myself would want to be able to contact loved ones if travel arrangements change, but that is what onboard aircraft phones are for.

Professionally, I can see the rest of the picture and that is of chaos in the cabin. I can see myself trying to remind people that we are in a small, enclosed, public place and to quiet down. I can see others becoming annoyed at the loud phone conversations while trying to sleep, people yelling over one another to hear themselves on the phone. The very worse thing I see, I am trying to prepare a cabin for a crash landing, trying to give people the tools and share my knowledge to survive an impending crash and passengers are not paying attention and on the phone. Some are trying to hear me, but cannot over the telephone conversations in the cabin. All of them are supposed to hear the reminders about where the exits are, what crash positions to use for their needs, and to remove sharp objects; but only a few are to receive special, specific instructions about assisting with the opening of the doors in the eventuality that the flight attendants cannot and in this scenario they cannot hear me over the phone conversations, and/or I waste valuable time trying to find someone who is not on the phone to give them these directions.

The daily scenarios annoy me already and I cannot see being able to maintain control of an already tense situation, but the emergency situation scares me to the core. On top of all that, why would we want to make it any easier for our enemies to be able to coordinate an attack in a 9-11 style?